

Alex Wise Blurred
by Peter Stone Brown

Blurred is the third solo album by singer-songwriter Alex Wise, a San Francisco based musician also known for hosting a syndicated radio show on environmental matters, "Sea Change Radio."

Blurred is a beautifully recorded album boasting a large cast of musicians, highlighted by the keyboard work of Emory Dura, with a gorgeous string section and soaring electric guitars. Wise mixes a several roots-based genres crossing from blues into touches of country and venturing into jazz.

The spooky title track is perhaps the highlight, with the first four songs of this 12 song set extremely strong. Wise is best when he sticks to the funkier side of things and one could imagine the latter day version of The Band covering the tough rollicking "Blame On My Shoulder," easily the most rocking song on the set. It is clear that considerable thought went into the arrangements which is often revealed in the textures beneath the dominant instruments. Wise has a cool knack for creating lyrics over what would usually be instrumental hooks. This occurs on the surprising "Someone Else Like You," and also on the chorus of "Blame On My Shoulder."

While the album drifts somewhere in the middle, the intensity is regained on "Secrets," which has very cool slide guitar and great harp work by Jeff Ballard with Wise delivering his toughest vocal. Though the blues based tracks stand out for me, Wise also has a true gift for melody with combined with the poetic imagery of "Recite Your Part" concludes *Blurred* with a moving and heartfelt closer.

Blurred is available at <http://alexwise.com>, Amazon and other music sites.